Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water

PTBT/CONF/SR.2
30 January 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 8 January 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

OBSERVER STATUS

1. The PRESIDENT said that the Secretary-General of the Conference had received a request for Observer status at the Conference from Bahrain in pursuance of rule 44 (2) of the rules of procedure. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the participants at the Conference agreed to grant Observer status to the State of Bahrain.

2. It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE

3. Mr. ROZENTAL (Mexico) congratulated the representative of Indonesia on his election to the post of President and highly commended the untiring efforts of his country to achieve stable peace and its efforts in the field of disarmament. For more than 30 years Mexico had been striving to bring about a complete nuclear-test ban and considered that now, with the end of the "cold war" and the start of an era of co-operation and mutual understanding, it was necessary to take advantage of the international situation in order to free the world of nuclear weapons. Broadening the scope of application of the Moscow Treaty to include a ban on underground nuclear tests would be instrumental in carrying out that task.

4. The signing of the Moscow Treaty had been a response to the demands of world public opinion, which had been frightened by the threat posed by nuclear weapons to the planet's future. Nevertheless, underground nuclear tests were still being conducted and since 1963 approximately 1,300 had been carried out, 85 per cent of which by the three Depositary States of the Moscow Treaty.

5. For more than 30 years, the General Assembly had given particular attention to the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. It should be pointed out that verification of compliance with a comprehensive test-ban treaty constituted a special problem. Although many proposals had been put forward in that regard, none of them had completely satisfied the parties directly concerned. Nevertheless, in recent years many of those difficulties had been overcome and the Soviet Union and the United States had agreed on a number of measures concerning verification of compliance with the threshold test-ban Treaty (1974) and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty (1976). With the necessary political will it would be possible to settle that question and, in that connection, the clarification of the positions of the Depositary Governments was one of the tasks facing the Conference.

6. A second task was to ensure universal accession to the future treaty. It was necessary to see to it, on the one hand, that the States that had not signed the 1963 Treaty acceded to it and, on the other hand, that all other countries in the world did likewise.

(Mr. Rozental, Mexico)

7. There was also a need to consider the advisability of including in the amendment to the Treaty provisions for ensuring its observance, in other words, providing for both verification of compliance with the Treaty as well as sanctions for violating it.

8. The Conference provided a unique opportunity to make such an amendment to the 1963 Treaty in order to provide the international community as a whole with a multilateral document which would ensure a complete halt to nuclear testing.

9. Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan) said that his country had consistently advocated the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Japan had been actively striving to support and strengthen the régime of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. It had also sought to bring about speedily a nuclear-test ban, particularly in view of the enormous danger of radioactive fallout resulting from such tests in the atmosphere. His country had welcomed the conclusion of the partial test-ban Treaty in 1963 as an important step towards a comprehensive test ban. Agreement on such a test ban had not yet been achieved because it was not simply a matter of halting tests, but was an extremely complex problem involving the security of nations.

10. The same could be said of the Amendment Conference. One might be given to believe that it was only a question of whether or not to adopt an amendment to the Treaty in order to prohibit underground testing. In reality, however, before adopting such an amendment, one would have to consider carefully whether a test ban at the current stage would indeed enhance the security of each State. Everyone, therefore, was well aware that an amendment was unlikely to be adopted at the Conference. Furthermore, they should bear in mind there were two nuclear-weapon States that were not States parties to the Treaty. The reason for convening the Amendment Conference might be that it was the most effective way to put international pressure on the nuclear-weapon States to take steps to achieve a comprehensive test ban. That problem must be tackled through joint efforts. All the States concerned must engage in a sincere dialogue and thoroughly discuss the real reasons for continued nuclear tests. When a common understanding had been reached through such a dialogue, it would be possible to work out realistic ways to achieve a comprehensive test ban.

11. It would be a mistake to overlook the role of the Conference on Disarmament as a forum for such a dialogue. As was well known, in 1990 the Conference on Disarmament had re-established the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. Japan sincerely hoped that the work begun by the Ad Hoc Committee would be continued in 1991. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the Conference on Disarmament was a body whose members included all five nuclear-weapon States.

12. The Amendment Conference was of unique importance because it was attended not only by most of the member States of the Conference on Disarmament, but also by a large number of other States parties to the Treaty. The current Conference could serve as an important catalyst for real dialogue and play a constructive role in facilitating the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament on the question

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

of a comprehensive test ban. Japan stressed the importance of a step-by-step approach as a realistic way to achieve a comprehensive test ban and considered that the question of the practicability of such an approach should be fully addressed at an appropriate stage.

13. Another fundamental aspect of the issue of a comprehensive test ban that required thorough discussion was the question of whether or not nuclear tests could be stopped in spite of the continued presence of nuclear weapons or, in other words, in spite of the need of various States to rely on nuclear deterrence. It had been argued on numerous occasions that as long as nuclear testing continued, the nuclear arms race would continue and that, therefore, a comprehensive test ban was a matter of greater priority and urgency than the reduction of nuclear arms themselves. On the other hand, it was also argued that continued testing was needed in order to ensure the reliability of existing stocks of nuclear weapons.

14. There were also other issues related to a comprehensive test ban that had to be discussed. For example, there was the question of the effectiveness of a comprehensive test-ban régime and, in that regard, the question of the verifiability of such a ban would have to be fully considered. In that connection, in the Conference on Disarmament the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events had been concentrating its efforts on a technical study relating to the establishment of a network of stations to detect underground nuclear tests by utilizing seismic detection methods. In particular, the Group planned to complete in 1991 a large-scale experiment that would make it possible to detect nuclear tests with greater accuracy. His country intended to participate actively in that project by conducting relevant experiments in Japan and by submitting a report on the results of such experiments to the Group of Scientific Experts.

15. The successful conclusion and subsequent ratification of the verification protocols to the two nuclear-test limitation agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union should be duly noted. Those two States were actively engaged in efforts to achieve a quantitative reduction in nuclear weapons. The international community should not only encourage that endeavour by the United States and the Soviet Union, but should also bear in mind the fact that there were a number of things to be learned from those negotiations.

16. The lack of meaningful progress in achieving a comprehensive test ban might well be due to the lack of real dialogue among the nations concerned. Japan was of the view that there was no problem that could not be solved if the States in question tried to arrive at a common understanding through genuine dialogue. His country sincerely hoped that the Amendment Conference would serve as an important catalyst for a meaningful and constructive discussion of the problem at the Conference on Disarmament.

17. Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden) said that a ban on all nuclear testing was long overdue. Therefore, the fact that all five nuclear-weapon States had carried out nuclear-test explosions in the past six months was deeply disappointing. In spite

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

of the determination expressed by States in 1963 and reaffirmed in 1968 to seek a halt to all nuclear-weapon tests for all time, there were still no negotiations on the cessation of nuclear-test explosions.

18. There was strong public opinion in many parts of the world against nuclear testing. In that connection, she cited a number of facts from the report Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons (document A/45/373), demonstrating the adverse effects of tests conducted in the Semipalatinsk region in Kazakhstan on the health of the population and the environment. Owing to the pressure of public opinion, nuclear tests were no longer conducted in the Semipalatinsk area. On the other hand, the latest Soviet test had taken place in Novaja Zemlja, about which the Nordic countries had expressed their grave concern. An independent international study with full access to all relevant data on the effects of nuclear testing on health was urgently called for.

19. Since nuclear weapons posed a threat to all human beings and all States, nuclear disarmament should be dealt with at a global, multilateral level. The question of a comprehensive test ban had been on the agenda of the General Assembly for 33 years. The repeated calls for an urgent halt to underground nuclear explosions reflected the massive support for prompt action in that area. The Conference on Disarmament had a special responsibility in negotiating a treaty for that purpose. It was therefore highly regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament - the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum where all five nuclear-weapon States were represented - had not as yet been mandated to conduct negotiations on a comprehensive test ban.

20. Sweden had consistently taken an active part in international efforts to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test ban and had repeatedly made proposals and sponsored draft resolutions on various aspects of that question and had put forward corresponding draft treaties.

21. Verification was a key factor in all disarmament agreements. Since 1976, Sweden had chaired the Group of Scientific Experts in the Conference on Disarmament, co-ordinating efforts to set up a global seismological verification system.

22. The Group was currently conducting the second technical test to evaluate the concept of such verification and, to that end, it appeared necessary to ensure broader international participation in carrying out the test. Its successful completion would prepare the way for the establishment of a global seismic system for verifying compliance with a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Other significant means of verifying compliance with such a treaty might include an international network for monitoring atmospheric radioactivity and on-site inspections.

23. Although the partial test-ban Treaty worked well, it did not contain provisions prohibiting underground nuclear explosions or verification provisions. The Amendment Conference provided an opportunity to discuss issues related to the

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

banning of all nuclear tests. Her delegation hoped that the spirit of compromise in the search for practical solutions, which had characterized the preparatory stage of the Conference, would also prevail during the course of its work and that after the Amendment Conference, machinery would be set up to enable the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which could be achieved only on a multilateral basis.

24. Substantive progress in the work on a comprehensive test-ban treaty would reinforce other multilateral disarmament efforts. It would greatly facilitate the taking of a decision to extend the period of validity of the non-proliferation Treaty in 1995, while lack of speedy progress might endanger the future of that Treaty.

25. A comprehensive test-ban treaty would without doubt create considerable obstacles to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. Although the quantitative cuts in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States were welcome, such reductions were not enough. Furthermore, continued nuclear testing ran counter to the intention declared by the super-Powers in 1985 to seek the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. There was no reason to develop new types of nuclear weapons if the ultimate goal was their complete elimination.

26. The environmental and health hazards associated with underground testing were an additional reason for concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Furthermore, since any nuclear explosion, even if designed for peaceful purposes, could be exploited for military purposes, it was necessary to eliminate the possibility of circumventing a ban on nuclear-test explosions by means of so-called "nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes".

27. In the current international atmosphere, the nuclear-weapon States should declare a nuclear-test moratorium. A fixed time-frame for the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty should be established at the same time. Sweden did not accept the view that a comprehensive test ban should be a long-term goal. A gradual approach to the cessation of nuclear tests was acceptable only when it was directly linked to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty at an early and specified date. The challenges presented by verification could no longer be used as a pretext for not negotiating a nuclear-test-ban treaty. Today there were no technical obstacles to the conclusion of such a treaty - there were only political barriers. Since the political situation had totally changed and the process of nuclear disarmament was under way, the time had come to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

28. Mr. ORDOÑEZ (Philippines) said that today in the world there were about 50,000 nuclear weapons, which were much more powerful than those used in the nuclear explosions 45 years earlier. While certain steps had been taken in recent years to reduce the nuclear threat, other developments continued to cause concern.

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

29. In 1987, the INF Treaty signed by the Soviet Union and the United States had signalled the end of the policy of confrontation, which had been the hallmark of the "cold war" era. Events in Eastern Europe had served to confirm that. Nevertheless, as everyone knew, that euphoria had not lasted very long. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq had been the first major challenge of the post-confrontational era, bringing to the fore the question of the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, which would be considered at the Amendment Conference.

30. The Middle East had long been a volatile region where the introduction of nuclear weapons could only exacerbate long-standing conflicts. Concern about that nightmarish possibility had been reflected in the many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly as well as the initiatives undertaken in other United Nations bodies and multilateral forums. Among the initiatives that the Philippines had strongly supported was the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. For similar reasons, the Philippines had supported intensified efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia as well as other regions of the world. The establishment of such zones, however, was merely an interim measure. It did not deal with the basic issues of drastically reducing existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons or preventing their modernization and qualitative development.

31. When the partial test-ban Treaty had been signed 27 years earlier, the world had been recovering from the shock of a near-nuclear confrontation. Today the world was facing no less insidious threats - planetary overcrowding, environmental problems, AIDS, drug addiction, and economic instability.

32. After the prohibition of nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, on land and under water, such experiments had begun to be conducted underground. Nevertheless, the effects of such testing could not have been kept hidden for long. The major accidents and incidents that had occurred in various parts of the world served to remind the world about the detrimental effects of nuclear testing on human society, health and the environment.

33. In 1990, 17 nuclear tests had been conducted, bringing to a total of 1,288 the number of such tests since 1963. Such testing could only serve as a negative example to would-be nuclear Powers. The Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in Geneva in 1990, had highlighted the fact that the issue of continued nuclear testing was central to efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

34. The world had heard time and again that the goal of some nuclear-weapon States was deep and mutually verifiable cuts in nuclear weapons. For years, the issue of verification had remained unresolved; without definite parameters, nations had been able to enhance and develop their nuclear weapons without any fear of being detected. Today, however, science and technology and the more open political environment were helping to resolve that question. A recent United Nations study on verification confirmed the current availability of various methods for verifying nuclear tests. As for the question of testing to ensure the safety and reliability

(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

of nuclear weapons, certain studies showed that actual testing need not take place in most instances. The best way to ensure safety and reliability would be to eliminate nuclear weapons entirely.

35. The Amendment Conference provided an opportunity to create a formidable barrier to the development and spread of nuclear weapons. Unlike the non-proliferation Treaty, the 118 parties to the partial test-ban Treaty also included nations that were considered to be on the nuclear threshold. Any decision taken at the Conference, for example, on prohibiting underground testing, would be automatically binding on those countries as well.

36. The work of non-governmental organizations could not be overestimated in achieving a nuclear-test ban. They had been in the forefront of efforts to keep public awareness focused on that issue. The coalition of grass-roots movements, parliaments, congresses and heads of government would be essential in order to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. The world was at the dawn of a new era in which ideas that had been under discussion for decades might finally bear fruit.

37. If it was not possible to reach agreement on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban at the current Conference, the Philippines would be in favour of reconvening in New York no later than June 1992 in order to continue work. In the interim, a working group or sub-committee established by the Conference could consider a number of questions related to the organization of control, institutional mechanisms and the legal aspects of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

38. Mr. VERGAU (Germany) said that a comprehensive test ban had long been one of the most important issues on the multilateral disarmament agenda. In view of the rapidly changing international situation, the Amendment Conference should be used to assess once again possible ways to achieve that goal.

39. The subject under discussion, however, could not be viewed in isolation from the overall context of disarmament and arms control. The remarkable success of the recent disarmament agreements, which would hardly have been considered possible a few years earlier, were still fresh in the minds of Europeans. In Europe, the process of creating mutual confidence and establishing a just and lasting peaceful order was under way. The signing of the Charter for a New Europe in Paris in November had marked the culmination of that process.

40. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed in Paris on the same occasion, was the most extensive agreement in the history of disarmament and arms control. An essential element of the Treaty was an unparalleled system of verification involving the comprehensive exchange of information and far-reaching rights and duties with regard to inspection.

41. Germany welcomed the forthcoming conclusion of the START Treaty, which would lead to deep cuts in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union in the interest of all countries. His Government advocated the earliest possible commencement of negotiations on short-range nuclear systems. The

(Mr. Vergau, Germany)

fundamentally changed security situation in Europe called for the complete elimination of land-based short-range nuclear missiles and nuclear artillery ammunition in Europe. The Geneva negotiations on a global, complete ban on chemical weapons were coming to the forefront of arms control efforts. The negotiations on a convention completely banning chemical weapons should be concluded as soon as possible. Progress in all those individual fields of disarmament would improve chances for taking further steps towards a comprehensive test ban.

42. Germany was a non-nuclear State. At the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in August 1990, his country had reaffirmed its solemn, unilateral pledge not to produce, possess or have control over nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. In the discussions on nuclear disarmament, Germany had on various occasions stated its position on a nuclear-test ban, stressing that it did not consider a test ban to be a substitute for tangible reductions of existing weapons.

43. Germany advocated reaching agreement as speedily as possible on an effectively verifiable nuclear-test ban at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. It considered a step-by-step approach to achieving that goal necessary and expedient. In that connection, he welcomed the fact that the signing in June 1990 of the verification protocols to the threshold Treaties had paved the way for the ratification of those Treaties the previous autumn. The greater the progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and the more successful the step-by-step approach on the part of the main nuclear-weapon countries, the better the prospects were for making further tangible headway in the multilateral efforts to achieve a test ban.

44. His Government considered the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to be the appropriate international forum for dealing with a test ban. The Conference on Disarmament had wide-ranging expertise in the development of verification procedures for nuclear tests. During the past session it had proved possible, after a long hiatus, to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban. The Committee should continue to work constructively in 1991.

45. One of the objectives of the Amendment Conference was to increase understanding of the complex subject-matter related to a test ban. He hoped that the Conference would stimulate future work in Geneva.

46. Germany deemed it expedient to pursue the goal of a comprehensive test ban by concluding agreements on a step-by-step basis. In its view, the following interim steps were conceivable. The countries which tested nuclear weapons might undertake to observe specific minimum periods between tests. The observance of such intervals should lead to a further reduction in the number of tests. For the same purpose, it might also be possible to envisage specifying a maximum number of test explosions per year. The feasibility of such a limitation was borne out by the trend in the frequency of tests in recent years. In 1990, 17 nuclear-test explosions had been carried out world wide, which was considerably lower than the average number of tests conducted annually between 1960 and 1990.

(Mr. Vergau, Germany)

47. The further reduction of explosion yields might also be conceivable. An important role in that respect was played by a reliable world-wide verification system that also covered low-yield explosions. The advances achieved in those efforts confirmed the view that test explosions with considerably lower yields could be reliably detected and monitored in the near future. Further progress towards the goal pursued by the Amendment Conference was clearly possible.

48. Mr. EDWARDS (Australia) said that his country's approach to the Amendment Conference was based on its commitment to the earliest possible cessation of nuclear testing by all countries in all environments for all time. The current climate was more conducive to progress towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Important developments in that regard were the conclusion of the INF Treaty, the ratification by the United States and the Soviet Union of the protocols to the threshold test-ban Treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty, progress in the strategic arms reduction talks (START), the re-establishment, after a seven-year hiatus, of the Ad Hoc Committee in the Conference on Disarmament; the strong support for the recent General Assembly resolutions on a comprehensive test-ban treaty; and the almost universal support for the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

49. It was very pleasing to note that the Presidents of Argentina and Brazil had recently announced that the two countries would co-operate more closely on nuclear issues through, inter alia, the establishment of a system of mutual inspections and the negotiation of a nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. They would also consider the question of bringing the Treaty of Tlatelolco into full effect.

50. Australia had been one of the first parties to the partial test-ban Treaty. Although it was not a comprehensive test-ban treaty, it, nevertheless, made an important contribution to nuclear non-proliferation, the prevention of significant categories of nuclear testing, and the prevention of radioactive pollution of the sea, the atmosphere and outer space. A central element in Australia's approach to achieving the goal of the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests was the early conclusion of a widely supported and verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva was the proper forum for negotiations in that regard.

51. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty had proved to be a difficult challenge, not only because of the need to persuade all the nuclear-weapon States that they should stop testing, but also because there was much work to be done on issues such as scope, verification and compliance in order to ensure that such a treaty was effective and lasting.

52. The re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban in the Conference on Disarmament had been a positive development. The participants in the Amendment Conference should not lose sight of the way in which the Ad Hoc Committee, even without a negotiating mandate, could continue the work carried out in the process of achieving a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The events of recent

(Mr. Edwards, Australia)

years, which had transformed the international security climate, demonstrated that what had seemed impossible or unlikely could be achieved if there was the political will and if the necessary effort was made.

53. At the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly the States parties had not reached consensus on convening the Amendment Conference and other related questions. It was important that the Conference should make a constructive contribution in areas such as verification. To that end, Australia and New Zealand had submitted a paper to help focus discussion on that subject as an important adjunct to the work being conducted by the Group of Scientific Experts in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

54. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka) said that for more than four decades mankind had been faced with the nuclear threat. The efforts of the international community in that respect, however, had not yielded the desired results and nuclear capability fuelled by "cold war" competition had grown to alarming proportions. Today the nuclear Powers possessed deadly arsenals capable of destroying human civilization several times over. That had been recognized in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Numerous studies in that field had identified the intrinsic relationship between the reversal of the nuclear arms race and banning nuclear tests. Leading scientists, experts, politicians, representatives of non-governmental and other organizations and people from all walks of life had stressed the importance of a nuclear-test ban as an integral part of the process of reversing the nuclear-arms race. They had always emphasized the urgent need to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the positive contribution that such a treaty could make to slowing down the nuclear-arms race and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons.

55. Those appeals, however, had fallen on deaf ears. The nuclear Powers continued to engage in nuclear-arms competition, claiming that a nuclear-weapon capability was essential for ensuring their national security. They were also under the delusion that nuclear deterrence provided greater security. Enormous arsenals of nuclear weapons had been accumulated and their total strength was equivalent to more than 1 million of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima.

56. That gave rise to the moral and practical question of whether such destructive power was needed and, if so, for whose benefit. At the current stage, collective action was necessary in order to eliminate the nuclear threat. The Amendment Conference focused on an important aspect of that question. His delegation believed that the time had come to address that question in a serious manner, taking into account the positive developments in the international arena and the destruction and suffering that such weapons could inflict on the human race. The fear and suspicion brought about by the "cold war" had become deeply rooted in the minds of contending parties. That fear and suspicion had made some parties believe that the only way to avert a nuclear war was to arm themselves to the teeth with those deadly weapons. Although in the past many volatile situations had not led to war, unless meaningful and speedy action was taken, the threat of a nuclear catastrophe would remain. Recently, the "cold war" atmosphere had given way to

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

warmer relations between the two super-Powers. Today there was talk of co-operation instead of confrontation. That had brought about an unprecedented improvement in East-West relations. Such co-operation had resulted in the settlement of regional conflicts and a greater readiness to work within the framework of the United Nations in ensuring international peace and security.

57. His delegation took the opportunity to appeal to the three nuclear Powers that were parties to the partial test-ban Treaty to take a serious look at their treaty obligations and to enter into negotiations with a view to achieving a comprehensive test-ban treaty as envisaged in both the partial test-ban Treaty of 1963 and the non-proliferation Treaty of 1968. The commitments made in those Treaties were commitments that had to be fulfilled not only by the nuclear Powers but also by other parties to them. In keeping with those obligations and the desire of the international community to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty, Sri Lanka had joined Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and Yugoslavia in proposing an amendment to the partial test-ban Treaty with a view to converting it into a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

58. Twenty-seven years had gone by without the parties making any serious effort to fulfil their treaty obligations. While earlier their excuse had been the prevailing political and military situation, such arguments were of no value in the context of current developments on the international scene. The dramatic changes that were taking place had been made possible largely by the increasing willingness of the super-Powers to work together for their mutual benefit. The super-Powers had demonstrated that they were prepared to provide leadership in settling pressing issues that threatened international peace and security. It was reasonable to expect the nuclear Powers that were parties to the partial test-ban Treaty to not only reassess their negative policies towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty but also provide the requisite leadership to achieve such a treaty within a reasonable time-frame.

59. Sri Lanka's decision to play a leading role in the Amendment Conference process had also been influenced by other considerations related to the social and economic consequences of the nuclear-arms race. In the modern age, it was against all civilized standards and moral convictions that billions of people were being deprived of such basic needs as food, clothing, shelter, health care, sanitation and education that were fundamental for them to live in dignity. Thousands of children died of starvation and malnutrition every day, while the international community spent billions of dollars for destructive purposes. It was estimated that worldwide military expenditures in 1989 had amounted to more than $US 900 billion.

60. His delegation wished to point out that some nuclear Powers were of the view that a step-by-step approach should be taken to efforts to curb the nuclear-arms race. In explaining their policies, they said that in the foreseeable future nuclear testing would continue to be indispensable to their national security and that nuclear weapons would also continue to play a critical role in their national security. They claimed that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban remained a long-term objective and must be viewed in the context of a period when they would not have to

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

depend on nuclear deterrence to ensure national as well as international security and stability, when there would be broad, deep and effectively verifiable arms reductions, substantially improved verification capabilities, expanded confidence-building measures and a greater balance in conventional forces.

61. In the view of his delegation, such policies would lead nowhere and would only make matters worse. The time had come to move away from those outdated policies and strategies, which had been designed to meet cold-war conditions. All nuclear Powers must review their policies and assist the world community in launching a process whereby all human beings could be assured of living in peace and friendship. The recent agreements between the super-Powers and among the European countries under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe were ample testimony to the ability of the international community to work together for the common interest.

62. There was also a view that the Amendment Conference should end with the current session. His delegation wished to place on record that it had never been the intention of the convenors of the Conference that it should end with one session. If that was the case, the Conference would fail to fulfil its mandate. In his delegation's assessment, there was an overwhelming desire among the parties to the partial test-ban Treaty to continue the process until a comprehensive test ban was achieved. That did not mean that such a ban should be achieved at the present Conference. The process should, however, continue until a comprehensive test ban was achieved. That was the first time that the parties, in keeping with their treaty obligations, had gathered to address the question of a comprehensive test ban, and his delegation therefore appealed to those parties which had difficulties with the continuity of the process to reconsider their position and adopt a more constructive attitude. His delegation would spare no effort in the search for modalities that might be acceptable to all parties, so that collectively they could work towards a comprehensive nuclear-test ban for the common benefit of mankind. If they failed in that endeavour, they would not only continue to face the threat of nuclear war and other adverse effects of the nuclear-arms race but would also be encouraging horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation.

63. States parties that had near-nuclear capability and were not parties to the non-proliferation Treaty were of the view that the latter Treaty was discriminatory. The failure of the nuclear Powers to work towards the achievement of a comprehensive test ban and their continued stockpiling of nuclear weapons, while advocating the abandonment of nuclear capability by others, was seen as hypocritical. Unless that discrepancy was remedied, countries which had near-nuclear-weapon capability were determined to reserve their right to acquire nuclear weapons. Such a development would make the control of nuclear weapons an extremely difficult proposition and bring the threat of nuclear war even closer.

64. Mr. SAETHER (Norway) said that the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water had been a major achievement. It had not, however, solved the problem of underground nuclear explosions. The international community had for many years sought a comprehensive test-ban treaty and Norway had actively supported that call.

(Mr. Saether, Norway)

65. There had been promising developments in recent years in the field of arms control and disarmament, such as the agreement on conventional forces in Europe, the mutual reduction by the United States and the Soviet Union of their nuclear arsenals and the ratification of the verification protocols to the 1974 threshold test-ban Treaty and the 1976 peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty. However, Norway had been particularly disappointed with the lack of progress on the test-ban issue in the Conference on Disarmament.

66. An effective system of verification was of the utmost importance in any international arms control and disarmament agreement. His Government had devoted considerable resources to conducting seismological research for that purpose. There were two seismic array stations in Norway, and a global network capable of analysing weak seismic signals was of crucial importance in verifying compliance with a test-ban treaty. That was the rationale behind Norway's proposal that the global seismological network should incorporate such arrays.

67. His Government was greatly concerned about the risks associated with underground nuclear testing, particularly in ecologically vulnerable environments such as the Arctic. Norway saw that as an additional important reason for halting all nuclear-test explosions. Full use should now be made of the momentum that had been created bilaterally between the United States and the Soviet Union and regionally in Europe in the field of disarmament and arms control, and the main objective of the Amendment Conference should be to give further impetus to the work being done on that issue in the Conference on Disarmament.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.